

FAA EXAMS example essay

Relationship Astrology - Question 5 2009

The following essay was written for the 2009 Interpretation Exam. It must be remembered that there are many different styles of academic writing and Astrological analysis. The essays examples represent different styles of essay construction and are not purported by the Exam Board to be perfect in all respects (eg. word length, grammar, syntax and astrological synthesis). They can however be used as a guide by potential candidates to gain a basic understanding of what FAA Examiners are looking for in essays.

Please print the relevant charts that accompany this essay.

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QUESTION

Briony: born 8:50 pm, 26th June, 1973, Sydney, New South Wales

Ascendant close to 25 degrees Aquarius

Graeme: born 3:05 am, 19th September, 1968, Sydney, New South Wales

Ascendant close to 29 degrees Cancer

Briony and Graeme who live in Sydney have been married for ten years and have three children aged seven, five and two. Both electricians by trade Briony retrained in Human Resources and Graeme is now Marketing Manager of a high tech Tracking Systems firm that requires some interstate travel. With two children now at school Briony has reentered the workforce and tension is starting to arise as they both juggle home and work commitments.

Using both synastry and composite charts how can you best guide them through this rough patch by raising their awareness of individual strengths and weaknesses, and where they may be able to help and support each other.

What challenges are arising from the relationship and what insights can you give them to help them move forward in a healthy and empowered way?

ESSAY ANSWER

In Relationship Astrology, we use a number of approaches:

1. The natal chart of each person and what they indicate about each individual's own relationship issues.
2. The Synastry between the natal charts of the 2 people – using both a Synastry Grid and Bi-Wheels of the 2 charts.
3. The Composite Chart of the 2 natal charts.
4. Transits and Progressions of the individual charts of the 2 people and transits to the Composite chart.

Tempting and relevant as it is, I won't pay much attention to the transits and progressions as this is not asked for in the question and it's not the Dynamic exam. I will make a brief reference to them however, as they are very relevant to the current relationship situation of the couple.

Briony is a feeling Cancerian with a strong emphasis on that caring, family-oriented sign (♋, ♀, ♀, ♀). Significantly, the key relationship planet, Venus, is also in Cancer, emphasizing her need to express and receive love and affection (♀, ♀) through a close partner and intimate, personal family relationships. She also has a major emphasis on the 5th House of children (♄, ☉, ♀, ♀). It's understandable that she would have been a stay-at-home mum while her children were young. Robert Hand says: "*Cancer symbolizes the need for*

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I'm going to briefly mention Briony's current transits as this is hugely relevant in her life now. Pluto, the planet of powerful forces of transformation, death and regeneration is sitting on the Cardinal Grand Cross and it's a critical time for her to resolve this inner conflict, before it potentially destroys (♇) her relationship with Graeme (☉ ☐ ♁). Pluto is bringing all their unresolved issues to the surface and if the tension is not constructively released, the battle of wills (♇ ☐ ♁ ☐ ☉) will be very destructive.

Graeme's chart also shows plenty of driven cardinal energy, including a T-Square between Saturn in Aries, Mercury/Venus in Libra and his Cancerian Ascendant. For him, the challenges of this pattern are between his loving family-oriented nature (D Rising), and the driving need to be out in the world (♃ ♀ 9th House), busy and involved with people (♀ ♃ ♁ 3rd House). Most of Graeme's planets (including all his personal planets) are in the First Quadrant, indicating an independent, self-motivated individual who focuses mostly on his own subjective reality, needs, purpose. He is probably not aware of Briony's needs and struggle and it's important for them both to take the time to communicate and share their thoughts and feelings thoroughly.

They both have a helpful and supportive Mercury (communication) Venus (love) conjunction and communication with their partner is important to both of them. However, their respective Venus/Mercury conjunctions are square to each other (♀ ♃ ☌ ☐ ♁ ♃ ♁). Libra is a rational air sign and seeks relationship harmony and peace, while Cancer operates through feelings and seeks an intimate, personal, emotional connection. Cancer is not the most rational of signs as it often operates from unconscious emotional drives, driving Graeme's more rational, male, Libran mind a little crazy.

Graeme's Mercury/Venus conjunction is well placed in Libra (ruled by ♀) and the 3rd House of communication (Oaccidentally dignified), but is opposed by his Saturn in Aries, which then squares Briony's Mercury/Venus. Although Graeme outwardly may be a good communicator and genuinely love his wife, he feels an inner inhibition and reluctance (♃) to really open up. He also finds it difficult to make decisions (♀ ♃ ♁ ♁ ♃ ♀). Briony will feel this inhibition keenly, with his Saturn squaring her Venus/Mercury. She may feel she cannot fully share her concerns as she will feel rejected and criticized by him. (his ♃ ☐ her ♁ ♃)

As both Graeme and Briony have a Venus-Mercury conjunction, this same conjunction shows up in the Composite chart, further strengthening the theme and the importance of easy, clear, loving communication between them, particularly at home (Fourth House). They need to repeatedly re-assess and re-affirm their individual and shared goals with each other. This is one of the great strengths they share between them and is critical to the resolution of conflict.

However, the Composite chart also shows some feisty, argumentative and emotionally charged communication, particularly over finances: ♂ ♂ MC 2nd House; and family matters ♂ ♀ ☐ ♃ ♀ 4th and ♃ ♀ ☐ ♃ 5th. As the Composite chart is ruled by Venus (Taurus Rising), their mutual Venus-Mercury conjunctions become more critical, and the Composite conjunction in Virgo in the 4th, trine the steady Taurean Ascendant, suggests that after an argument (see aspects above), they sit down around the kitchen table and carefully going through all the issues to sort out their differences.

As noted, Graeme's first Quadrant is heavily populated. With his powerful Second House (♃ ♂ ♃ ♂ ☉ ♂ ♃ ♀ ♀, ♃ ♁), he is driven, even obsessively so, to work hard (♃ ♃ ☉ ♃ ♀ ♀), make money, and create a sense of personal self-worth (☉ in 2nd House). This will take a tremendous amount of his time, energy as he has all the hallmarks of a workaholic (♃ ♃ ☉ ♃ ♀ ♀).

Having his Moon and Mars so powerfully placed in Leo in the First House strongly reinforces his need to be autonomous and independent and he may become aggressive (♁ ♁ 1st House) if challenged. He instinctively feels he needs to be the boss (♁ ♁ 1st House; ♂ ♁ ♁ ♃ ♁) and while this well suits his position as a Marketing Manager, it may be problematical at home if Briony has not 'owned' and integrated her own powerful Sun-Mars-Pluto T-Square.

Briony's Mars in Aries squares her Sun and thus has an affinity with Graeme's Leo Mars, indicating a mutual understanding and sharing of this fiery energy, but it also reinforces the likelihood of tension between them. Briony's Sun rules her Leo Descendant and Seventh House of partnership, further highlighting her strong

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connection to Graeme's Leo planets. She appreciates, although is sometimes frustrated by, Graeme's powerful, confident personality.

But there is a power-struggle brewing with Pluto now activating her Sun-Mars-Pluto-Nodes Grand Cross and Brian's Chiron in early Aries. This 'rough patch' they are experiencing now is reinforced by the current unstable and challenging Saturn-Uranus opposition transiting Graeme's 2nd House planets in Virgo. It's clearly time for some major lifestyle changes, re-assessment of values, work and family roles for both of them.

A further look at the synastry between their charts reveals more obvious challenges and weaknesses between them, but also some great strengths.

Briony's Sun, Venus and South Node in Cancer all sit in Graeme's 2th House, showing that for him, she is a great support to him behind the scenes and in a deeper soul sense: she will nourish and sustain him in an inner, unconscious way. Her Cancerian Mercury lies just on his Ascendant in the First House, providing him with an almost maternal avenue of communication – she is important to his senses of inner, emotional well-being, and I'm sure he likes to feel that she's at home taking care of (♋) that aspect of his life.

Her Gemini Saturn tightly squares his powerful and intense Pluto-Sun-Uranus triple conjunction (and more widely his Jupiter) in Virgo. He is compelled to develop and express the value of his work ethic self-identity (♁ 2nd House) in powerful (♃) and innovatively brilliant ways (♃), and the square from her Saturn will make him feel thwarted and restricted by her more cautious way of thinking and communicating (♄ ♀). While hard Saturn contacts between people can be very challenging and the source of tension and frustration, they also provide valuable ties of commitment between a couple – the glue that holds the relationship together over time. Too much Saturn and there are heavy feelings of restraint, limitation and hardship, causing unhappiness; not enough Saturn and the relationship crumbles at the first sign of difficulty. Often strong Saturn synastry also indicates that the couple are karmically linked and together are working towards building something of lasting value. In some cases, the couple will work together eg in a business.

There are many examples of Saturnian connections between their charts, and this is reinforced by the prominent Taurean Saturn in the First House of the Composite Chart:

Graeme's elevated Saturn (9th House) squares his Cancer Ascendant-Capricorn Descendant axis; opposes his relationship planet Venus, trines his Mars, quincunxes his Sun and also his 4th House Neptune (forming a Yod with Saturn at the elevated apex). As this Saturn rules his Capricorn Descendant, he seeks a mature, grounded, capable partner, who will encourage and support him to succeed and develop in life, which Briony is.

Briony has a wide-ish (9°) out-of-sign conjunction to her Sun in the 5th House, and while these factors weaken the conjunction a little, I feel she does carry this responsible Saturnian energy. Her Saturn semi-squares her Moon, semi-sextiles her Venus, and squares her Mars.

Briony's Saturn makes a lot of aspects, both challenging and easy, to Graeme's chart: he will appreciate her strength, resilience and commitment (her ♄ ♀ his ♃, ♄; ♃♂, ♄), but may also struggle with the feeling of being restricted and 'parented' by her (her ♄ exactly ☐ his ☉).

Of some concern is the number of synastry squares between the same personal planets: ☽ ☐ ☽, ☉ ☐ ☉, ♃ ☐ ♃, PdP and the lack of harmonious synastry contacts and conjunctions among these planets. Their karmic Y and X also square each other. This many squares between their personal planets indicate a fundamental incompatibility between them and, while it may have initially been rather stimulating and exciting to be with someone different, over time strong resentments and frustrations about each feeling misunderstood and unmet by the other can develop: they are at logger-heads a lot of the time.

Briony's Cancer Sun also receives an out-of-sign square from Graeme's Uranus and a square from his Chiron, indicating potential instability and separation (either literally or emotionally), and there are no helpful trines or sextiles (or even supporting conjunctions) to her Sun from his chart. Her emotional and soft Cancerian nature will often feel insecure with him.

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A further examination of the Composite chart reveals a prominent Fixed Grand Cross, a statement of power, strength and stability, but also indicating the relationship itself will resist the forces of change. This can be a good thing in that the innate strength of their mutual commitment to it (♄ ♂ 1st , Fixed Angles, ☉ ♀ ♂ IC) enhances the likelihood of its longevity, but if there is no flexibility and adaptability, it become dead and stuck in unconsciously mutually-agreed patterns. Fortunately, the Mutable squares from Gemini to Virgo keep things alive, interesting and changing.

The Sun in a Composite Chart is a powerful statement about the shared goals and purpose of any relationship, and must be supported if the relationship is to succeed. Graeme and Briony's Composite Sun is in Leo in the 3rd House – this goal of this marriage is for each of them to support the other's individual development and expression of identity. They will both seek to grow through education and as noted previously, good communication is essential (3rd House).

I'd suggest to them to consider hiring some home help (♃ , ♀ ♀ 4th) to ease Briony's stress from juggling the many details and demands of home, family and work life. Graeme has become used to Briony taking care of everything up to now and is unlikely to be aware of the causes of her stress (his ♃ , ♂ ♀ in 1st). The stable Taurean Ascendant and First House Saturn, plus the Fixed Sign Angles and Sun sign, suggest a fundamental mutual committed to their long-term success as a couple, particularly in terms of work. It's important that they don't lose sight of the personal side of their relationship with an over-focus on work and financial security.

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1. Robert Hand: "Horoscope Symbols" p219 – 219
 2. Alan Oken: Article "The Real Scoop on Mutual Reception." www.alanoken.com

Word Total: 2695

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